

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00811 011837Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08 AID-05 IGA-02
MCE-00 IO-13 DOE-11 SOE-02 OES-07 NRC-05 /127 W
-----118770 020841Z /16

R 011800Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4392
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0811

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS MASS, AR
SUBJECT ARMS LIMITATION UNDER AYACUCHO DECLARATION

REF: STATE 015196

1. IF THE MATTER WERE BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION,
ARGENTINA IS LIKELY TO SUPPORT AN INITIATIVE TO
REAFFIRM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE AYACUCHO DECLARATION
AND WOULD PROBABLY BE RECEPTIVE TO A REGIONAL MEETING
OF THE SIGNATORIES TO DO SO. AT THE MOMENT, HAVING
BRUSHED UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSE TO WAS WITH CHILE OVER
THE BEAGLE CHANNEL AND HAVING SUFFERED THE WRENCHING
EXPERIENCE OF REJECTING AN INTERNATIONAL AWARD,
ARGENTINE WOULD PROBABLY BE PARTICULARLY RECEPTIVE
TO ANY OPPORTUNITY TO REAFFIRM REGIONAL TIES AND
REPUDIATE THE VERY IDEA OF RESORTING TO ARMS TO SOLVE DISPUTES.

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DEPENDING ON THE DEPTH OF THAT FEELING, ARGENTINA MAY EVEN BE
WILLING TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ITSELF. IT WOULD, HOWEVER,
DEPEND ON HOW THE PRESENT EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE THE BEAGLE
DISPUTE BILATERALLY WITH CHILE WORK OUT, SINCE ARGENTINA WOULD
HARDLY RELISH MEETING WITH NEIGHBORS WHO MIGHT BE CENSORIOUS
OF ITS ACTIONS OVER THE BEAGLE WAAYARD, MUCH LESS TO GIVE CHILE
A CHANCE TO CRITICIZE ARGENTINA AMONG ITS PEERS.

2. LOOKING MORE BROADLY AT THE ISSUE, ARGENTINE DIPLOMATS ARE LIKELY TO POINT OUT AS THEY HAVE TO US BEFORE THAT ARMS PURCHASES IN SOUTH AMERICA ARE NOT AT A LEVEL WHICH SHOULD GIVE CAUSE FOR CONCERN. THEIR IMMEDIATE REJOINDER IS TO POINT AT THE SIZE OF THE US ARSENAL AND OUR SALES TO THE MIDEAST AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. THE ARGENTINES ARE ALSO NOT LIKELY TO LOOK KINDLY UPON A US INITIATIVE IN THE MATTER, GIVEN THE PRESENT RESENTMENTS OVER US CUTBACKS IN MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS AND SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS. FURTHERMORE, THE PRESENT ARGENTINE PERCEPTION THAT THE US IS TRYING TO LIMIT LESS POWERFUL COUNTRIES FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL SUPREMACY WOULD MAKE THE ARGENTINES SUSPICIOUS AND STUBBORN ABOUT MAKING WHAT MIGHT BE SEEN AS CONCESSIONS TO BIG POWER (READ US) DESIRES REGARDING THEIR ARMS CAPABILITY.

3. ARGENTINA IS NOT PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT REGIONAL DISPUTES OUTSIDE OF ITS OWN BORDERS AND IS NOT LIKELY TO HAZARD ITS OWN INTEREST TO HELP LESSEN TENSIONS IN THE ANDEAN AREA. IT NATIONALISTIC MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS ALSO NOT LIKELY TO ACCEPT CONSTRAINTS OF A REAL NATURE THAT MIGHT BE SEEN AS INTERFERING WITH ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY OR MILITARY POWER. THEREFORE, WHILE THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH THE BEAGLE AFFAIR MAY FIND ARGENTINA RECEPTIVE TO LOFTY
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REAFFIRMATIONS OF AYACUCHO, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ARGENTINA WOULD BE PARTY TO ANY FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN ITS ARMS POLICY.
CASTRO

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